

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**25 April 2022**

**COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE- CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY**

For the period February to 11 April 2022

### **Progress on Portfolio Matters.**

In my previous Council Report I mentioned that the construction activity on the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area Enterprise Zone (with our building some offices and light industrial premises (as Phase 1)) was generating enquiries from interested parties. I am pleased to report that in the past few weeks the Property Team has held meetings with four different businesses, and issued preliminary Heads of Terms to three of these interested parties. What is interesting is that the enquiries for the light industrial premises are from established businesses within the manufacturing and advanced engineering sector which is obviously a sector that we would like to see grow and strengthen within our area. Two of the businesses expressing interest are from outside our district and their interest in our speculative units is not about relocation, it is about expansion, which again is a positive sign. What is also encouraging is that some of these businesses have mentioned proposals for developing apprentice roles within their organisations as part of their business expansion plans, which should give rise some interesting training and employment opportunities.

My Cabinet colleagues and I have been briefed on the various expressions of interest for sites and buildings on the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area and there is consensus that we are keen to be open to welcoming a variety of businesses to invest and occupy this site whilst maintaining the strategic ambition for the area as a high quality business park. I will work with my Cabinet colleague, the Portfolio Holder for Development and Regeneration, to ensure that investment is secured as quickly as possible, that the quality is maintained, and that commercial deals are struck to benefit the council in terms of revenue income and capital receipts.

With regard to other disposals I am anticipating the legal completion in the very near future of a small site at Reid Way, King's Lynn, that is facilitating the development of some affordable/temporary housing units. We are also gearing up to market a development site for nine housing units in Burnham Market by appointing an external agent who will advertise the site for us. In addition we are looking to bring to the market a small development site, for two semi-detached houses, in Stoke Ferry in the near future, however some

further due diligence is required before it is ready to be marketed, and this work is on-going.

Staff resources within the Property & Projects department has had a slight set-back with the Property Services Manager leaving to work for another organisation, after being here for only twelve months, and one of the main Facilities Management team members needing to take some extended time off for health reasons. However a recruitment campaign has been undertaken to fill the Property Services Manager position and the role has been offered to one of the candidates, however it is unlikely that they will be in post for three months owing to notice requirements with their current employers. Notwithstanding the resource issues being experienced the team continues to progress matters with outstanding lease renewals, rent reviews and rent arrears that have mainly arisen owing to the Covid pandemic.

Although King's Court Office accommodation falls under one of my Cabinet colleague's area of responsibility, this site is managed by the Property Services Team, and I would just like to mention that in short order they managed to negotiate the lease surrender of some of the office accommodation occupied by the West Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group in King's Court that will now be used as a welcome/administration centre to help Ukrainian refugees. I also understand the King's Court caretakers pulled out all the stops to dismantle and store furniture, and decorate the rooms over a weekend – so well done to all those involved.

### **Meetings Attended**

Full Council  
Special Full Council  
Cabinet Meetings  
Meeting with the Chairman of Gaywood Community Centre  
Cabinet Briefings  
Portfolio Meetings  
Meetings with Officers